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ABSTRACT

This monograph provides a variety of positively focused techniques for effectively managing behaviors of students with emotional/behavioral disorders in the classroom. Each section focuses on a specific behavior management technique and includes a brief description of the technique, an explanation of why the particular technique works, conditions or circumstances influencing the effectiveness of the technique, and guidelines for implementing the technique. The techniques covered include: (1) social reinforcement; (2) token reinforcement; (3) modeling; and (4) behavioral contracting. A concluding chapter points out that teachers who use positive behavior management strategies create a classroom environment that is conducive to academic learning and social acceptance of students and that involves both the managing of student problem behaviors and the teaching of desired alternative behaviors. (Contains 58 references.) (DB)

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From the Mini-Library Series on
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Teacher-Mediated Behavior Management Strategies for Children With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Sarup R. Mathur
Mary M. Quinn
Robert B. Rutherford, Jr.
Arizona State University

Published by
The Council for Children
with Behavioral Disorders

1996

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children/youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

About This Monograph

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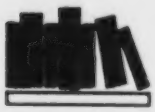

About the Mini-Library Series on Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Foreword

Today, professionals are struggling to discover ways to deal successfully with a heterogeneous population of students, some of whom are especially difficult to manage and instruct. No other group of youngsters poses a greater challenge than those variously labelled "seriously emotionally disturbed," "behaviorally disordered," or "emotionally/behaviorally disordered." These children and youth manifest a combination of social, academic, and behavior problems that require not only powerful individual strategies but also effective program options. Fortunately, there is a growing body of knowledge regarding what constitutes quality practices for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD).

This mini-library series targets the most crucial issues and concerns regarding these children and youth. It covers the needs of students of various ages who are being served in different programs and settings and who demand diverse policy considerations. The mini-library derives from the 1995 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders. The seven monographs and their authors are

- *Best Practices for Managing the Behavior of Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Within the School Environment*
  Beverley H. Johns, Eleanor C. Guetzloe, Mitchell Yell, Brenda Scheuermann, Jo Webber, Valerie G. Carr, and Carl R. Smith
- *Developing a System of Care: Interagency Collaboration for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Russell J. Skiba, Lewis Polsgrove, and Karen Nasstrom
- *Early Intervention for Young Children At Risk for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Implications for Policy and Practice*
  Wesley Brown, Maureen A. Conroy, James J. Fox, Joseph Wehby, Carol Davis, and Mary McEvoy
- *Effective Strategies for Teaching Appropriate Behaviors to Children With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Robert B. Rutherford, Jr., Mary M. Quinn, and Sarup R. Mathur

- *Planning and Implementing Effective Programs for School-Aged Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Within Inclusive Schools*
  Howard S. Muscott, Daniel P. Morgan, and Nancy B. Meadows
- *Teacher-Mediated Behavior Management Strategies for Children With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders*
  Sarup R. Mathur, Mary M. Quinn, Robert B. Rutherford, Jr.
- *Types of Youth Aggression and Violence and Implications for Prevention and Treatment*
  Richard Van Acker

As editors, we strove to bring together information with practical value to the teachers, administrators, and other professionals who must respond to the challenges posed by children and youth with E/BD. We hope this mini-library series will contribute to your success and the success of the students with whom you work.

Lyndal M. Bullock
University of North Texas

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University

Series Editors

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Introduction

Students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) pose a challenge for classroom teachers. These students make extreme demands on teacher time and energy for classroom management and leave little or no time for academic instruction. Conventional behavior management practices that have primarily focused on control, confinement, punishment, and exclusion have had limited results in producing desirable behavioral changes in students with E/BD. In contrast, positive and proactive approaches to managing student behavior have been found to be effective in producing long-term, durable, and desired behavioral changes.

This monograph is designed to provide special education teachers with a variety of positively focused techniques for effectively managing student behaviors in the classroom. Positive behavior management techniques include *social reinforcement, token reinforcement, modeling,* and *behavioral contracting*. These interventions are implemented directly by the teacher to manage student behaviors. The focus of these teacher-mediated interventions is to provide students with a positive and predictable classroom environment that is conducive to their academic learning and social skills development.

Each section of the monograph is divided into a brief description of the behavior management technique, an explanation of why the particular technique works, conditions or circumstances influencing the effectiveness of the technique, and guidelines for implementing the technique.

It is important to realize that there are no quick fixes when it comes to establishing classroom behavior control. Some students with emotional or behavioral problems have had many years of experience controlling their environment through problem behavior. It will often take considerable teacher time and effort to teach students with E/BD to follow classroom rules, control their problem behaviors, and develop prosocial behaviors.

Social Reinforcement

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Description

Social reinforcement consists of teacher attention, feedback, and approval contingent upon desired student behavior. Social reinforcement is often an effective intervention, when used in combination with other behavior enhancement and reduction procedures, for developing prosocial behaviors of students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD; Walker, Hops, & Fiegenbaum, 1976). Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) point out that behavior-specific adult feedback and praise is an extremely powerful form of focused attention that communicates approval and positive regard for desired student behavior. They suggest that due to a history of negative adult interactions, students with behavioral problems initially may not be responsive to adult praise, but through pairing with other behavior enhancement procedures, the positive valence of praise eventually will increase.

Social reinforcement involves three components: attention (providing differential teacher attention for appropriate or on-task behavior), feedback (telling the student what he or she did well), and approval (praising the student for doing it well). *Teacher attention* often has a powerful influence on student prosocial as well as disruptive behavior. Children are sensitive to adult attention whether it is positive (e.g., a smile, thumbs-up signal, "atta boy," wink) or negative (e.g., a frown, "no, stop that," head shaking). Unfortunately, many teachers find that disruptive and off-task behavior is more noticeable, and they therefore respond more frequently with negative attention while ignoring appropriate on-task behavior. An unintended consequence is that negative teacher attention often increases, rather than decreases, student misbehavior.

Positive teacher attention increases the likelihood of prosocial behaviors. Teacher attention, however, cannot be labeled a social reinforcer until the relationship between the attention and the frequency with which that behavior occurs is demonstrated. Attention, in and of itself, cannot

be said to be reinforcing for students. Only after it is demonstrated that it strengthens a behavior can attention be labeled a reinforcer.

Teacher feedback is the process of providing specific evaluative information to a student for the purpose of maintaining or improving future responses (Schloss & Smith, 1994). Feedback indicates how a student's performance compares to expected standards. The purpose of positive teacher feedback is to provide the student with a clear description of those aspects of his or her behavior which are appropriate and on task. For example, "Todd, you did a really nice job of waiting your turn to play with the computer. I know it took an especially long time today for a computer to become available. You were very patient and just continued to read your textbook until the computer was ready."

Teacher approval involves teacher praise and other positive responses contingent upon student prosocial or on-task behavior. Teacher approval of appropriate behavior is a powerful and effective incentive for many students if it is used frequently, specifically, and sincerely, and if teacher disapproval for inappropriate behavior is used sparingly. Teacher approval can be in the form of words (spoken and written), physical expressions (facial and bodily), and proximity (nearness and touching; Madsen & Madsen, 1983).

Why Social Reinforcement Works

The goal of social reinforcement is to increase appropriate student behaviors through contingent, teacher-positive responses to these behaviors. Numerous studies have demonstrated the impact of manipulating teacher social reinforcement in altering the behavior of students (Becker, Madsen, Arnold, & Thomas, 1967; Hall, Lund, & Jackson, 1968; Kazdin & Klock, 1973; Thomas, Becker, & Armstrong, 1968; Walker, Hops, & Fiegenbaum, 1976). Singly, or in combination with other behavior-enhancement procedures, social reinforcement has been shown to increase a wide range of student academic behaviors and social skills (Rutherford, Chipman, DiGangi, & Anderson, 1992).

Teacher attention, feedback, and praise function as conditioned reinforcers where positive social interactions between the teacher and student become reinforcing to the student. Through pairing positive social consequences with other reinforcers such as tangibles, privileges, tokens, or contracts, teacher social reinforcement can come to have a powerful influence on the behavior of children with E/BD (Kerr & Nelson, 1989; Schloss & Smith, 1994).

Conditions Influencing the Effectiveness of Social Reinforcement

While less formal use of teacher attention, feedback, and praise is to be encouraged in all interactions between the teacher and students, research and experience indicate that several factors should be considered before a teacher decides to implement a systematic program of social reinforcement. First, when teacher attention is systematically applied to desired behaviors, and withheld for undesired behaviors, the undesired behaviors often increase markedly, but briefly, before decreasing. This *extinction burst* is a common phenomena when previously reinforced behaviors are no longer reinforced. If the teacher is prepared for this short-term increase, student behaviors will usually change in the direction desired by the teacher.

Second, in some instances, teacher social reinforcement has limited impact on student behavior due to a student's history of receiving little positive adult attention, or, in fact, receiving primarily negative adult attention. In this case, teacher social reinforcement will only begin to influence student behavior through constant pairing of positive attention, feedback, and approval with more tangible and overt reinforcers for desired behaviors. The goal of using social reinforcement is for teacher social responses to student behavior to become the primary and natural source of student reward and recognition. Some students need to be taught that social reinforcers are potent and important sources of positive reward.

Guidelines for Implementing Social Reinforcement

It is important to focus on procedures which enhance the effectiveness of teacher attention, feedback, and approval when using systematic teacher social reinforcement to increase desired student behavior.

Guidelines for Teacher Attention

- *Focus on positive not negative behavior.* Teacher attention can influence and reinforce student appropriate as well as inappropriate behaviors. When teacher attention is used as a social reinforcement intervention, the focus of that attention should be on the student's academic and social skills that the teacher wishes to increase. Conversely, the teacher should attempt to ignore or provide limited attention to the student's inappropriate or off-task behaviors. While some student behavior cannot be ignored, if

the ratio is kept at approximately five instances of teacher attention for positive behaviors to each instance for negative behavior, then teacher attention will generally increase desired student behaviors. If teacher attention is focused more on negative behavior than positive behavior, then undesired behaviors are likely to increase.

- *Provide positive not negative attention.* Teacher attention to student behavior can be either positive or negative. The quality of teacher attention greatly impacts its effectiveness in influencing desired student behaviors. If teacher attention takes the form of approval, praise, and encouragement for appropriate behaviors, rather than disapproval, reprimands, or negative comments, it is likely to result in increased instances of desired behaviors.

Guidelines for Teacher Feedback

- *Be specific.* Tell the student exactly what the academic or social skills are that he or she is performing well. Avoid nonspecific or general feedback. Do not simply say "Nice playing!" or "Good work!", but say "Pat, I liked the way you were able to play with the other kids without getting upset. There were many times that you took turns and shared the ball. Nice playing!" Or "Brett, you answered 9 of the 10 questions correctly on the math test. Good work! Those questions were not easy."
- *Provide immediate feedback.* It is important that feedback be given as soon as the student exhibits the desired behavior. Avoid delayed feedback, especially when first trying to influence student behavior. The more time between the student's actual behavior and the teacher's feedback, the less likely it is that the student will benefit from the feedback. Do not say, "Jane, remember last week's assembly when you said 'please' while asking if you could sit with Judy? Nice asking!" Instead say, "Jane, thank you for being so polite just now when you asked to borrow some paper. You asked by saying 'please' and you said 'thank you' when I gave it to you."
- *Provide frequent positive feedback.* The more opportunities the student has to receive positive teacher feedback for performing desired behaviors, the more likely he or she is to continue exhibiting these behaviors.
- *Be positive.* Feedback should be presented positively rather than negatively. Avoid statements like "Antonio, you're finally paying attention to my directions when I show you how to do square roots. See how easy it is if you pay attention?" Instead say, "Anto-

nio, you got each of these square root problems right. You really listened and understand how to do them, don't you?"

- *Avoid repetitious phrasing.* There are as many ways to give students feedback as there are behaviors for the students to perform. Avoid routine, trite, or rote feedback. Provide the student with many different positive feedback responses to his behavior. Do not always just say "Good job! You didn't get mad," but say "You really are working at controlling your temper. I know it's hard." Or, "I'm impressed with the way you didn't get mad when the other team won." Or, "You really handled that situation well. You didn't get mad at those sixth-graders when they won. You asked them to play another game."

Guidelines for Teacher Approval

- *Move fast.* Effective praise and approval should immediately follow desired student behaviors. In order to "catch the child being good," it is often necessary to go quickly to the student and praise his or her appropriate behavior. Teacher approval is most effective when the teacher moves around the classroom noting and reinforcing targeted student behaviors as they occur.
- *Give five approvals for every disapproval.* As with teacher attention, it has been shown that if each instance of teacher disapproval of a student's inappropriate or off-task behavior is matched by five approvals for appropriate or on-task behaviors, both approval and disapproval will be more effective. If disapprovals equal or outnumber approvals, most students will not consistently respond to either teacher praise or criticism.
- *Give substance to teacher approval by occasionally backing it up with other reinforcers.* While teacher praise and approval generally have a powerful influence on student behavior, it is sometimes useful to provide other reinforcers for appropriate academic or social behaviors. "Peter, you really did a fantastic job of cooperating with your teammates when you all played volleyball during PE. Tomorrow I'd like you to be captain of one of the teams."
- *Use a variety of verbal and physical social reinforcers.* Verbal and written teacher approval responses might include words and phrases such as "Good!" "Great!" "Super!" "Yes!" "Right on!" "Terrific!" "Fantastic work!" "Wonderful!" "Outstanding!" "Excellent!" "Perfect!" "Well done!" "Thank you!" "That's really a clever idea!" "You're doing so much better!" "You should be very proud of yourself!" Physical approval responses might include teacher actions such as smiling, winking, nodding, thumbs up, a pat on

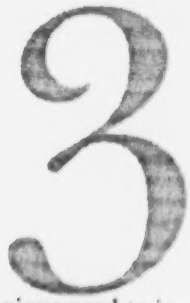
back, signaling okay, arm touching, hair ruffling, clapping, or shaking hands.

- *Describe the student's specific behavior.* Provide the student with specific feedback coupled with praise and approval for appropriate academic and social behaviors. With younger children, children with severe E/BD, or those just beginning to receive systematic social reinforcement from the teacher, it is important that approval is directly tied to specific descriptions of the behaviors that are socially reinforced.
- *Determine whether public or private praise is best for a particular student.* Reactions to teacher approval differ across students. Some students love to receive public praise from the teacher for their behavior while others find such public attention to be highly aversive. The teacher must determine if a particular student would be more responsive to a private, one-to-one interaction, such as "Tyrone, I've really been impressed with the way you have handled Michael this week. Each time he's tried to give you a hard time, you simply walked away from him. He hasn't bugged you as much the last couple of days, has he?"
- *Use the student's name when praising his or her behavior.* Approval and praise are often more effective when they are personalized. Many students respond well to having their name used in conjunction with teacher attention, feedback, and approval.
- *Be convincing when giving approval and praise.* The teacher should mean it when praising student behavior. If teacher social reinforcement is not sincere, most students will quickly learn to ignore teacher feedback and approval.

Summary

Informal teacher attention, feedback, and approval are to be encouraged in all student-teacher interactions. Teacher social reinforcement, however, when used as a systematic intervention to alter specific behaviors of students with E/BD, involves teacher commitment to a predictable set of responses each time desired student behaviors occur. Social reinforcement, either singly or combined with other behavior enhancement and reduction techniques, will influence and alter most student behavior if applied in a conscientious, sincere, and consistent manner.

Token Reinforcement



Description

Token reinforcement is a behavior management technique used to increase appropriate student behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors through the use of "tokens" or symbolic reinforcers. The reinforcement system based on the use of tokens is called a *token economy* (Kazdin, 1994). In a token economy, desirable behaviors are specified and defined so that students know exactly what is expected of them. When the desired behaviors occur, students are given social reinforcers contingent on these behaviors and are further rewarded with a prespecified number of tokens or points. These tokens are later exchanged by the student for other more tangible reinforcers called *backup reinforcers*. Backup reinforcers are those items or activities that the student holds as having value.

Token economies can be based on three types of contingencies: individualized, standardized, and group (Kazdin, 1977). As its name suggests, individualized token economies are designed to relate directly to a particular student's behavior. This is accomplished by selecting target behaviors, the criteria for reinforcement, and backup reinforcers specific to the individual student's needs. Individual token economies are typically set up for one or a few students in a classroom.

Standardized token economies are used when everyone in the class is expected to perform the same target behaviors and are rewarded with the same number of tokens contingent on performing target behaviors to preset, standardized criteria. This is the most common type of token economy.

Group token economies focus on the entire group as one unit. Tokens are awarded only when the collective or average group performance meets preset criteria. This system provides for individual accountability to the group as well as positive interdependence as each group member's reward is tied to the performance of the other group members. This type of token economy is well suited for classrooms set up in cooperative learning groups.

Why Token Reinforcement Works

Tokens are conditioned secondary or learned reinforcers that become reinforcing by repeated pairing with primary or other secondary reinforcers (Kerr & Nelson, 1989). Walker and Buckley (1974) report that token economies are effective for a number of reasons:

1. Tokens can be easily dispensed without disrupting the teaching/learning process.
2. Tokens can be exchanged for a variety of individualized backup reinforcers. This enables the token system to be more personalized and meet the diverse reinforcement needs of various students.
3. Requirements for earning reinforcement can be adjusted as the needs of the students change.
4. A token economy gives the teacher flexibility in adjusting the relationship between certain behaviors and their rewards. Some behaviors require more effort on the part of the student and can therefore be worth more tokens.
5. Continued pairing of tokens with more natural social reinforcers such as teacher attention, feedback, and approval (see the Social Reinforcement section) will increase the value of these social reinforcers while the tokens can gradually be discontinued.
6. Token economies can be used to help the student acquire skills that will eventually lead to other more natural reinforcers such as recognition, good grades, or self-satisfaction.

Token economies have been successfully used in a variety of settings to enhance academic learning (Libb, Sachs, & Boyd, 1973; Lovitt & Curtiss, 1969; Lovitt & Esveldt, 1970; Rickard, Clements, & Willis, 1970; Walker & Hops, 1976) and to promote appropriate social behavior (Becker et al., 1967; Bedell & Archer, 1980; Kazdin, 1977; Thomas, Nielson, Kuypers, & Becker, 1968; Walker, Hops & Greenwood, 1993). As with any behavior management technique, if applied correctly and consistently in a systematic fashion over an extended period of time, token economies can be a highly effective method for changing or controlling student behavior.

Conditions Influencing the Effectiveness of Token Reinforcement

Token economies should be considered when students lack the motivation to follow classroom rules, to exhibit appropriate social behaviors, or to perform at acceptable academic levels. They are particularly effective when natural reinforcers such as social reinforcers are not available

or are not strong enough to bring about the desired behavior change (Schloss & Smith, 1994).

Effectively setting up and running a token economy can be very demanding in terms of teacher time and effort. Therefore, it is recommended that in dealing with mild behavior problems, other less intensive behavior management techniques such as setting specific classroom rules, teacher social reinforcement, differential reinforcement, planned timeout, or behavioral contracting be considered before a token economy is implemented (Walker & Holland, 1979). However, if behavior problems are moderate or severe, establishing a token economy may be a more effective means for controlling or preventing disruptive behavior (Myles, Moran, Ormsbee, & Downing, 1992).

Token economies are not substitutes for sound teaching procedures and should be implemented to increase student motivation to behave appropriately and learn specific skills. If a student does not know how to perform a task, it is imperative to directly teach the skill while providing motivation through token reinforcement.

Guidelines for Implementing Token Reinforcement

Determine the Target Behaviors

Decide if the initial focus of the token economy will be on academic or social behavior or both. It is advisable to address the most urgent needs first (Drabman & Tucker, 1974) and to use token reinforcement to increase appropriate behaviors rather than simply focus on stopping negative behaviors. For example, it is better to earn points for staying in your seat during the math period than to earn points for not getting out of your seat during math. Kerr and Nelson (1989) also recommend initially selecting relatively easy behaviors for which all students can earn points. If they meet with initial success, students are more likely to develop an interest in and commitment to the process.

Next, target behaviors must be defined in such a way that they are observable, countable, and measurable (Myles et al., 1992). Students must clearly understand which behaviors will be rewarded with tokens. For example, stating the desired behavior as "Turn in your completed daily math assignment (with at least 80% accuracy) before 2:00 p.m." is better than just "Complete your assignments." It may be necessary to provide examples and nonexamples of the target behaviors and to model and role-play them until students know exactly what is expected and what

will be reinforced. If possible, students should be involved in selecting the target behaviors to be reinforced in the token economy.

Kerr and Nelson (1989) suggest addressing the following questions when choosing and describing target behaviors:

1. How can you describe the behavior in terms the student can understand?
2. How will you specifically know when the behavior has been exhibited?
3. How important is the behavior?
4. Is the goal that problem behaviors be reduced or completely eliminated?
5. How will you measure the behavior?
6. Does the behavior occur in other settings?

Determine When the Token Economy Should Be in Effect

Drabman and Tucker (1974) advise that a token economy be implemented only during the part of the day when it is needed the most. After initial implementation, the program can be expanded to include more behaviors or span longer periods of time. Many classrooms eventually operate a token economy throughout the school day.

Choose the Tokens

Tokens include beads, poker chips, paper clips, play money, points, stickers, hole punches, check marks, or stamps on a chart. If tangible tokens are to be used they should be durable, portable (Ayllon & Azrin, 1968), easily administered (Kazdin, 1977), developmentally appropriate, inexpensive, and unique enough to deter unauthorized duplication (Myles et al., 1992). Individualizing tokens by giving unique tokens to each child can prevent the urge to loan, trade, or steal tokens. Tokens can be individualized by giving a different color, size, or shaped token to each child.

When deciding on the type of token to use, keep in mind their innate potential power as reinforcers apart from the backup reinforcers. The mere act of accumulating tokens may become reinforcing to some students. Collecting tangible tokens allows the students to not only see but also touch the "fruits of their labors."

Whatever the type of token used, it should *always* be paired with a variety of social reinforcers (e.g., verbal praise, smiles, hugs, or pats on the back). This will gradually increase the value of the social reinforcers and make it possible to eventually phase out the token reinforcers.

Determine How, When, and at What Rate Tokens Will Be Distributed

A major consideration is to distribute tokens without interrupting the teaching process. Teachers often complain that distributing tokens requires considerable time and effort (Drabman & Tucker, 1974). Choose a distribution method that will not disrupt individual teaching and learning styles. With practice and improved student behavior, distributing tokens will become more efficient. As students become accustomed to the token economy they can eventually be taught to monitor, evaluate, and reinforce their own behavior through self-delivery of tokens.

When distributing tokens, it is important to give the student feedback about which specific behaviors earned the tokens. This specificity aids the student in making the connection between performing the target behavior and the subsequent reinforcement. Pairing the delivery of tokens with more natural social reinforcers also enhances the maintenance and generalization of the target behavior. Schloss and Smith (1994) suggest the following procedure for delivering tokens: State the process behavior (the effort of the student), the product behavior (the result of the process behavior), and both the natural (good grade) and token (points or tokens) reinforcers earned. For example, "Jeff, you were working very hard and completed your entire math worksheet correctly. You have earned an A for today and 5 tokens. You must be very proud of yourself."

Rate of distribution must also be considered. Tokens should be distributed at a high frequency in the beginning. Reinforcing the target behavior each time it happens (continuous reinforcement) increases the likelihood of its occurrence. After the behavior has been established and is stable, tokens can be awarded after a fixed (e.g., every 5 correct responses) or random (e.g., after every 3 to 7 correct responses) number of behaviors has occurred or after a fixed (e.g., every 5 minutes) or random (e.g., every 3 to 7 minutes) amount of time has passed (intermittent reinforcement).

Tokens should only be exchanged for backup reinforcers at preestablished times. During the initial stages of the token economy, exchanges need to be made often. Lengthy delays between the student's behavior,

the earning of tokens, and receiving the backup reinforcer may confuse the relationship between the performance of the behavior and reinforcement (Schloss & Smith, 1994). As the behaviors begin to stabilize, the exchange schedule can become less frequent. For example, initially tokens may be exchanged on a daily basis and eventually only once or twice a week.

Some researchers advocate the use of response cost in a token economy (Walker, 1983). Response cost involves the removal of points or tokens for the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors. As with awarding tokens, their removal must always be behavior specific and accompanied with a verbal description of the inappropriate behavior. When using response cost it is important that students not be allowed to accumulate negative points by "going in the hole." When it is necessary to remove points from a student who has a zero balance, a prespecified backup contingency such as timeout or loss of privileges should be implemented instead.

Caution should be used when implementing response cost within a token economy. While it is generally a mild form of punishment, its misuse can actually increase undesired behaviors by providing attention to these negative behaviors. Nelson and Rutherford (1988) suggest that response cost contingencies in a token economy are counterproductive and for some students turn a potentially positive system emphasizing the development of academic and prosocial behaviors into a negative one. Withdrawing tokens or points emphasizes decreasing negative behaviors rather than building positive behaviors.

Determine Backup Reinforcers and Their Cost

A token system is only as powerful as its backup reinforcers! Successful token economies initially provide a wide range of developmentally appropriate edible, tangible, and activity backup reinforcers (Drabman & Tucker, 1974). Edible and tangible reinforcers include fruit, snacks, juice, gum, erasers, books, pencils, stickers, or other inexpensive items that students find desirable. Activity reinforcers are events such as running errands, being first in line, listening to a tape, playing games, spending time on a computer, or making something. Asking students to help determine the "menu" of rewards often makes the backup reinforcers more desirable. Occasionally changing the items on the menu will help to sustain student interest in the token economy. While these more overt rewards are often necessary at the beginning of a token economy, the goal of the system should be to move from these types of reinforcers to more intrinsic academic and social reinforcers (Myles et al., 1992). This

process will be described under the section on maintenance and generalization.

Once the backup reinforcers are determined, it is necessary to decide how much each item will cost. Many teachers use the actual value of the item to determine the point value. For instance, one token could be worth one cent or one minute at an activity. Teachers must also take into account the "psychological" value of the item (Drabman & Tucker, 1974). For example, while different items such as pencils and candy may have the same actual monetary value, their true values may be very different in the eyes of the students.

An alternative to individualized or standardized contingencies in a group economy are group contingencies, that is, reinforcers shared by the entire group. Group reinforcers can include such things as extended recess, a class party, or some special group privilege. This is usually done by averaging the group performance or randomly choosing the performance of one group member to determine reinforcement. In cooperative learning situations, individualized and group contingencies can effectively be combined. For example, individuals can earn tokens for their own behaviors and the combined group can earn "improvement points" when the group exceeds a predetermined criterion.

Provide for Maintenance and Generalization

Perhaps the most important part of the token economy, and the most often neglected, is the process of establishing maintenance and generalization. Token economies should be temporary in nature, and their termination should be planned before they are implemented. Whatever method is used to fade out the token economy, social reinforcement should be increased during this phase to supplement the removal of the token rewards.

Kazdin (1977) provides several suggestions to enhance maintenance and generalization in token economies:

1. Select target behaviors that are likely to generalize. Behaviors such as completing assignments or using a polite voice will be likely to "generate their own reinforcing consequences" (p. 179) and will be more easily maintained after the token reinforcer is removed.
2. Substitute different behavior management techniques such as behavioral contracts or social reinforcement for the token reinforcement.

3. Fade the consequences until there is a gradual removal of the tokens. This can be accomplished by giving fewer points for behaviors or raising the price of the backup reinforcers. It is important to remember that a gradual rather than an abrupt withdrawal will help the students to maintain appropriate behaviors after the token economy is gone.
4. Expand the token system to other settings or involve different people in the management of the token economy. For example, the system could be broadened to include behaviors in art class, music class, on the playground, in the cafeteria, or at home. More people can be involved by allowing other faculty and staff, as well as parents, to award tokens for appropriate behaviors.
5. Make incremental changes in the reinforcement schedule from continuous to intermittent. The ratio of behavior occurrence to reinforcement should gradually be increased until token reinforcement is eventually eliminated.
6. Gradually increase the time delay between the behavior and receiving the token or the time between earning tokens and the exchange of tokens for the backup reinforcers.
7. Teach the student self-control by having students eventually give themselves tokens or points for their behavior. When the student "is trained to control his own behavior, behavioral gains may not be lost once a program is withdrawn" (Kazdin, 1977, p. 191).
8. Teach the student to use self-talk or self-instruction to control their behavior. Michenbaum and Goodman (1971) demonstrated the effectiveness of using self-talk and self-instruction in training impulsive and hyperactive children to become more deliberate and methodical when performing tasks. This can be enhanced by providing students with visual and verbal prompts that will remind them of what is expected in the token economy.

Implementing the Token Economy

Thoroughly teach the purpose and procedures of the token economy as you would any other skill. Provide daily review and practice until the students can explain the target behaviors and how the token reward system works.

Once the token economy is in effect, it may be necessary to make minor changes and adjustments. Measuring target behaviors before and during the implementation of the token economy and during the maintenance and generalization phases can help determine when program

changes are warranted. Do not make alterations too abruptly—some behaviors take longer to change than others.

Sometimes students do not seem to respond to token economies. Kazdin (1977) makes several suggestions for dealing with the problem of unresponsive students:

1. Check to ensure that backup reinforcers are powerful enough. If they are not, use more potent reinforcers. Another method for getting the students interested in the reinforcer is to allow them to "sample" a small portion of the reinforcer. For example, a student may be allowed to attend the Friday pizza party for "free" at first and then only after he earns the tokens necessary to go to the party.
2. Make sure that the student is capable of making the appropriate behavioral response. If not, teach the skill. This can be done by response priming or shaping the behavior by rewarding approximations of the behavior until the student can perform the entire behavior. For example, a student may receive tokens for completing 3 out of 10 problems correctly initially, then 5 out of 10, 7 out of 10, 9 out of 10, and finally 10 out of 10.
3. Determine if the student understands the relationship between performing the behavior, the token, and the backup reinforcer. In this case, it may be necessary to immediately award the token for the behavior, then immediately allow the student to exchange the token for the backup reinforcer. This sequence can be followed, and the delay then gradually be increased until the student makes the connection. Walker and Buckley (1974) also suggest pairing the token with behavior-specific praise and encouragement and making the token exchange time an important classroom event.

Expand the Token Economy

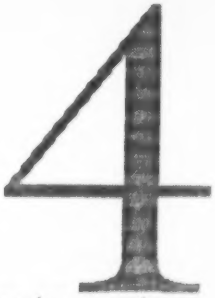
Other target behaviors and extended periods of time for the token economy may be added once the system is established and the target behaviors have stabilized. Token economies have also been used to teach the principles of real economies (Minner & Knutson, 1980). Some teachers have successfully set up classroom banks where students can save tokens, open a token checking account, or apply for a token loan. Others have opened charge card accounts by filling out applications reviewed by a board comprised of students. Students are given charge limits and pay interest on their purchases. Some systems even incorporate health insurance plans so students can earn tokens (based on their average daily earnings) while they are absent. These additions can teach

the student a great deal and may well keep their interest after the token economy has been established.

Summary

Token reinforcement can be a highly effective means to change behavior when students lack the motivation or the natural reinforcement necessary to perform at acceptable levels. Tokens can generally be dispensed with ease, and the program can be altered to fit the diverse needs of a variety of students. When paired with more natural social reinforcement, the token economy can gradually be faded out and the power of the social reinforcers increased.

Modeling



Description

Ms. Nelson observed that Cory had a difficult time paying attention to her directions and staying on task. She reminded him numerous times to stay on task to no avail. She assigned him to a cooperative learning group with John and Scott who almost always attend to Ms. Nelson and finish all their assignments on time. After repeatedly observing his teammates being praised by Ms. Nelson for being on task, he began to demonstrate more on-task behavior. Once he began to work more consistently on his assignments, Ms. Nelson also provided Cory with a good deal of praise.

This example demonstrates that observing behaviors (paying attention and staying on task) and seeing them being reinforced (teacher's praise) in other children, and then being praised for exhibiting the same behavior (attending and being on task oneself) is a highly effective intervention for learning new behaviors. When a student observes other students performing in an appropriate manner and being rewarded for that behavior, he or she is more likely to imitate that behavior.

Modeling is an instructional procedure in which students learn or modify academic and social behavior through observation and imitation. Examples of behavior are presented to student observers to prompt their engagement in similar behaviors (Martin & Pear, 1992). Teachers often use this technique for teaching both academic and social skills and managing student behavior problems in the classroom. Modeling has been successfully used with students demonstrating mild to severe academic and social behavior problems.

The term "model" generally refers to an ideal person or an exemplary performance. From a behavioral perspective, a model functions simply as a discriminative stimulus that prompts or sets the occasion for imitation from observers (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1986). Models may be real or imagined, adults or children, single or multiple, and imitated behaviors may be positive, neutral, or negative. In some instances, modeled

behaviors are imitated without direct student awareness of the modeling process. Students learn many behavior patterns from their parents, teachers, and peers without being directly aware of the influence of modeling. At the same time, many desired behaviors exhibited by teachers or peers and observed by the target students can be directly and overtly taught through modeling.

Why Modeling Works

Modeling is a highly effective means of reducing inappropriate or troublesome behavior and acquiring, maintaining, or increasing desirable and appropriate behavior. The primary function of modeling is to transmit information to student observers about desired behavior (Bell-Gredler, 1986). Exposing students to appropriately modeled skills enhances the likelihood of the acquisition and maintenance of similar skills. Modeling is based upon the principles of observational learning where individuals are more likely to pay attention to stimuli in a context that predicts reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). The expectancy of positive reinforcement facilitates acquisition or modification of modeled behavior. When people observe modeled behavior being reinforced in others, they tend to imitate the same behavior. The modeled behavior functions as a predictor of reinforcement and increases students' task-attention and task-completion behaviors (Bell-Gredler, 1986).

Singly, or in combination with other instructional procedures, modeling has been found to be effective in teaching many simple to complex academic and social behaviors (Lonnecker, Brady, McPherson, & Hawkins, 1994). It has been used successfully to remediate behavioral problems such as fears (Bandura & Menlove, 1968), social withdrawal (O'Connor, 1972), and social skills deficits (Mathur & Rutherford, 1994).

Modeling can be interactive where the model guides the target child through each step of the target skill or strategy, or it can be passive where the target student simply watches the modeled behavior without directly interacting with the model (Biederman, Davey, Ryder, & Franchi, 1994). Live modeling, in which real people (teachers, students) function as models, has been found to accelerate a variety of academic and prosocial behaviors in students of all ages. The advantages of live modeling are that students are provided with the actual demonstration of a behavior, as well as the opportunity for instruction and guidance regarding the modeled behavior.

Video-modeling, referred to as symbolic modeling (Martin & Pear, 1992), has been found to be effective with students who do not have severe

cognitive impairments. The advantage of symbolic modeling is that the modeled behavior can be viewed as many times as needed to learn the behavior (Bell-Gredler, 1986). In a study of children with autism, for example, youngsters who observed examples of videotaped conversations, practiced those conversations, and received positive reinforcement (praise) for demonstrating these verbal skills showed both skill acquisition and skill maintenance (Charlop & Milstein, 1989).

Conditions Influencing the Effectiveness of Modeling

The conditions that influence modeling include the functional value of the behavior, the characteristics of the model, the characteristics of the target student, and the instructional effectiveness of the teacher (Bandura, 1977; Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1991). If a target behavior has meaning to students, they are likely to attend to and imitate that behavior. The characteristics of the model álso influence the likelihood of imitation by the target students. If the target student accepts and values the model, he or she is more likely to imitate the model's behavior. The effectiveness of modeling also depends upon how motivated the target student is to observe and imitate the modeled behavior.

The student's ability to attend to the modeled behavior and accurately process information about the modeled behavior influences imitation. Teachers should include modeling as an instructional component when they are teaching new academic and social skills to students with emotional or behavior problems. Modeling is most effective when it is incorporated with other instructional components such as social reinforcement, role-playing, and performance feedback. Modeling should continue until the newly learned academic and prosocial skills are performed by students at acceptable levels.

Modeling can be a very powerful technique for teaching appropriate behavior, but it is not without limitations. Directing the target student to observe modeled behavior does not always result in teaching or modifying that behavior. Modeling often does not work as a single component of instruction. Some behaviors are difficult to demonstrate through modeling, and others are difficult for students to imitate. Students with emotional or behavioral problems who have not acquired generalized imitating responses may have difficulty in attending to and imitating modeled behaviors. Although it is possible to teach students to respond to the model by using prompts and cues, and by reinforcing imitation, it may not always yield positive results. Providing rationales, explana-

tions, and guidelines concerning the modeled behavior enhances the imitation, retention, and generalization of target behaviors.

In addition, teachers need to be cautious when comparing the target student's behavior to that of the model's behavior. The comparison should not be negative. Statements like "Billy, look at Sally, and see how nicely she greets other people. You never say 'hi' to anybody. You should pay attention to the way Sally says hello to others," generally will not facilitate effective modeling. Such negative comparisons may lead the target student to resent the model and thus, he or she may continue to display inappropriate behavior rather than exhibit the modeled behavior.

Modeling usually works well with students who have the skill in their repertoire or are ready to learn the skill. Students who are extremely disruptive, out of control, or lack motivation may need more direct consequences for behavioral change. In such cases, the vicarious effects of modeling may not be sufficient to result in the learning or modification of student behavior.

Guidelines for Implementing Modeling

Based upon the accumulated literature on effective teaching, guidelines are offered for teachers to maximize the effectiveness of modeling in instruction (Bell-Gredler, 1986; Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1986; 1991).

Select a Valid Behavior

Students are likely to pay attention to those behaviors that have value in the classroom. Identify those behaviors that need to be demonstrated for the students. Establish the functional value of the modeled behaviors by reinforcing those behaviors in peer models. Teacher comments such as, "Susan, I really liked the way you worked quietly during math" and "Jim, I liked the way you lined up for recess" may influence the imitation of these behaviors by other students in class.

It is also essential to ascertain that the target student is developmentally and cognitively able to imitate the behavior. For example, it may be difficult to teach a 3-year-old how to initiate and maintain complex long-term positive social interactions with peers solely through observing others engaged in these interactions.

Select Appropriate Models

Students are more likely to imitate peers who share similar interests, values, or skills. While it is not necessary that the model always be a close friend of the target student, as long as the model and target student share similar skills, interests, or attributes, the model will have a greater impact on the target student. For example, José and Scott like to play baseball together. José is quite socially competent and is an excellent model for many prosocial skills. Scott has a number of social skills deficits. José may serve as an effective model for several social skills for Scott.

The model should be competent enough to perform the target behavior at acceptable levels. Students with high status are more likely to serve as effective models. This status is determined by the acceptability of the model to the target student. Some evidence suggests that the most effective models are often peers of the same sex, same age, or who have attributes or interests similar to the target student's. Finally, teachers should use a variety of students to model prosocial behavior. It is essential that the target student has the opportunity to observe as many different models exhibiting the desired behaviors as possible.

Promote Student Attention

Ensure that the student pays attention to the modeled behavior. Many teachers use prompting to ensure that the target student attends to the modeled behavior. For example, the teacher can say, "Judy, pay attention to Joyce. She is going to show us how to greet others when they come into the room." Providing prompts or cues enhances the likelihood that desired behavior will be attended to and imitated. The student's attending to the model should be socially reinforced.

Promote Imitation of Modeled Behavior

Highlighting the resemblance between the model and the target student enhances the likelihood that the modeled behavior will be observed carefully and imitated. Resemblance between observers and models can be highlighted in terms of skills, interests, or experiences. Provide students with a rationale for the modeled behavior. When rationales, guidelines, and explanations are provided, the likelihood of imitation of the modeled behavior is increased. Simplify the modeled behavior by providing clear, concise, and easy-to-imitate examples of the behavior. The target behavior or strategy should be modeled in simple, easy-to-follow steps.

The model may use self-talk while performing the target behavior to facilitate imitation by the target student. As the model verbalizes during modeling, the thinking processes that regulate the performance are made observable to the target student. Behavioral rehearsal, where the target student repeats the behavior, should be included after the student is exposed to the modeled performance. Steps or skills that the target student fails to imitate accurately may be repeated by peer models. The target student may be asked to describe the steps as the model performs the target behavior. Careful planning of reinforcement contingencies that build positive interactions between the models and target students should be established. After the student has learned the modeled behavior, fading of modeled examples of the behavior should be incorporated by expanding stimulus control so that stimuli (peers or adults) other than the specific model can influence the desired behavior.

Provide Reinforcement for Modeled and Imitated Behavior

Ensure that both the model and the target student are reinforced for performing the desired prosocial skill or strategy. The key to modeling is reinforcement for the model when he or she demonstrates the behavior and reinforcement for the target student when he or she imitates the model. It often is reinforcing for the target student to observe a high status peer be reinforced by the teacher for his or her behavior. This is called *vicarious reinforcement*. Then, when the target student imitates the same behavior, he or she is socially reinforced again by the teacher. This is called *direct reinforcement*.

It is essential that the teacher be consistent in delivering reinforcement to the target student for imitating the modeled behavior. Newly learned behaviors may not continue if they are not reinforced. Modeling is often so effective because the target student is reinforced twice for each instance of imitating the modeled behavior, vicariously and directly (Rutherford et al., 1992).

Summary

Modeling is an instructional procedure where desired behaviors are demonstrated (by models) to prompt imitation (by target students) of similar behaviors. The procedure has been found to be useful in teaching prosocial skills and reducing inappropriate behaviors of students with emotional/behavioral disorders. The effectiveness of modeling depends upon the functional value of the target behavior, the characteristics of models, the characteristics of target students, and teacher effectiveness in promoting and reinforcing the modeled and imitated behavior.

Behavioral Contracting

5

Description

A behavioral or contingency contract is a formal written agreement for student behavioral change negotiated between a student and a teacher, parent, peer, or other person. A typical contract specifies the behavior(s) to be increased and/or decreased, the student's goals with respect to these behaviors, and the consequences associated with goal attainment or nonattainment (Kerr & Nelson, 1989; Rutherford, 1975). Contracting has been effective in modifying a variety of desired and undesired behaviors in students of all ages. While its usefulness can be limited by the student's ability to read and comprehend the terms of a contract, Rutherford and Polsgrove (1981) reviewed the contracting literature on children and youth with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) and found that "contracting has contributed to behavioral change in a number of instances with this population" (p. 64).

Behavioral contracts include

1. A precise definition of the student's expected behaviors.
2. A clear statement of the positive consequences that will result from performing these behaviors to a specified criterion.
3. A statement of the consequences for failing to perform the behaviors to the criterion.
4. A statement of the teacher's (or other involved adult's) role and responsibility in facilitating the success of the contract.
5. A description of how maintenance of the desired behaviors will be reinforced. (Schloss & Smith, 1994)

Why Behavioral Contracting Works

The goal of behavioral contracting in the school setting is to provide students and teachers with a written agreement which spells out that the teacher will provide specific positive consequences contingent upon the student's behavioral change. Behavioral contracting as a classroom intervention procedure was developed by Homme, Csanyi, Gonzales, and

Rechs (1970) and is based upon the Premack Principle (Premack, 1965). The Premack Principle holds that providing the opportunity to engage in preferred or high-probability behaviors contingent upon completion of less preferred or low-probability behaviors is an effective reinforcement procedure for modifying student behaviors. The Premack Principle states that "If you do X, then you can do Y" or "If you complete your language arts assignment by 9:30, then you can play Pog for 10 minutes." A behavioral contract is a written document which formalizes the arrangement between low-probability behaviors (e.g., desired academic or social behaviors) and high-probability behaviors (e.g., reinforcers).

The behavioral contracting literature has focused on five areas of contracting: marital contracting, adult self-change contracting, family contracting, academic performance contracting, and child or adolescent contracting in which the student with E/BD is the primary target of behavior change through a contract (Rutherford & Polsgrove, 1981). While the other areas of contracting occasionally involve participants who are labeled emotionally or behaviorally disordered, child or adolescent contracting focuses primarily on changing the specific social behaviors that result in the student being identified as E/BD.

The child or adolescent contracting literature contains numerous case studies and clinical demonstrations of the effectiveness of behavioral contracting with this population (Murphy, 1988; Rutherford & Polsgrove, 1981). Well-designed child and adolescent contracting studies have demonstrated significant reductions in such problem behaviors as fighting (Bristol, 1976), fire-setting (Gershman, 1976), truancy (MacDonald, Gallimore, & MacDonald, 1970; Hess, Rosenberg, & Levy, 1990), verbal abusiveness (Weathers & Liberman, 1975), poor classroom performance (Kelley & Strokes, 1982), low academic response rates (Lovitt & Curtiss, 1968), and drug abuse (Frederiksen, Jenkins, & Carr, 1976).

Conditions Influencing the Effectiveness of Behavioral Contracts

There are several explanations for the effectiveness of behavioral contracting with students with E/BD including reciprocity, communication, predictability, negotiation, stimulus control, and behavior trapping.

Reciprocity (Stuart, 1971) holds that mutually positive contingencies, which are therefore reinforcing to both the student and the teacher, enhance the contract's power and influence. While prior classroom interactions may have been based upon coercion rather than coopera-

tion, the positive reciprocal or quid pro quo nature of the contract often adds to its effectiveness.

Enhanced *communication* between students and teachers often results from effective contracts by emphasizing brevity, directness, responsibility, alternatives, congruence, concreteness, and behavioral specificity (Alexander, 1973). In addition, the use of explicit behavioral contracts facilitates the *predictability* of the delivery of reinforcers to the student contingent upon specific and predictable behavioral change (Tharp & Wetzel, 1969).

Contracts also provide for the opportunity for *negotiation* where the student learns how to approach problems and obtain compromises. Contracts often enhance the student's ability to identify and exchange behaviors, persuade others, and obtain compromises for behavioral change (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1993).

The contract itself may serve as a discriminative stimulus for performing the specified behaviors. Thus, *stimulus control* is accomplished when the contract document serves as a cue or prompt for performing the specified behaviors. The instructional value of the contract makes the responsibilities and privileges of everyone involved in the contract clear and specific. Likewise, contracts may cause a *behavior trapping effect* (Baer & Wolf, 1970) where the contract establishes a behavior pattern which, once begun, produces ongoing and natural positive consequences that maintain the behavior. The contract may help the student "trap" the natural maintaining contingencies of positive teacher social reinforcement for continued behavior change.

Advantages of behavioral contracting as a teacher-mediated classroom intervention with students with E/BD include the fact that contracts generally take place in the natural environment of the classroom. And they are usually negotiated and implemented between those with a vested interest in student behavior change—the teachers, counselors, parents, and others directly involved with the student. Thus, behavior change as a result of contracting is more likely to be maintained and generalized across time and other natural settings.

Another advantage of contracting is that it influences teacher behavior as well as student behavior, making it possible for students to predict teacher responses. Teachers often respond erratically and inconsistently to the problem behaviors of students with E/BD. Behavioral contracts enhance a student's ability to count on predictable and positive adult responses to his or her behavior.

A third advantage of behavioral contracting is that contracts are often a viable alternative to other teacher-mediated interventions which may not be as effective with older or more sophisticated students. For example, some students may not respond to contingent ignoring or teacher social reinforcement, modeling, token reinforcement, or other teacher-imposed behavior management approaches but may find the negotiation and adult behavior change components of contracting attractive and rewarding.

A limitation of behavioral contracting is that teachers do not always have access to and control of the significant reinforcers in a student's life. Contracting is based upon the premise that the teacher is able to identify and provide sufficient reinforcers to influence student behavioral change. If a student's reinforcers are determined by peers or others not involved in the classroom, or if what the student finds reinforcing is not appropriate for the teacher to provide (e.g., intimidating others or substance abuse), it may be difficult for teachers to provide the reinforcers necessary to alter behavior through contracting.

Guidelines for Implementing Behavioral Contracts

Rutherford (1975) and Rutherford and Bower (1975) identified guidelines for designing effective behavioral contracts in classrooms and other therapeutic settings for students with E/BD. These guidelines include:

1. A behavioral analysis must be made of the student behaviors to be included in the contract. Behavioral analysis involves specifying (a) the antecedents which will cue or prompt the desired behaviors in the contract, (b) the actual behaviors to be developed, and (c) the consequences which will maintain the behaviors. "Antecedents" include those environmental stimuli, rules, directions, prompts, or guidelines that set the occasion for a given behavior and a specific, predictable positive consequence. For example, the antecedent cues for completing 15 mathematics word problems at home may include the math textbook, a sharp pencil, several sheets of paper, directions, and a quiet well-lit room. These cues may collectively signal that the "consequences" of completing the "contract behavior" (e.g., math problems done correctly by 8:00 a.m. the following morning) will be positive. The positive consequences may be a higher letter grade, praise from the teacher and parents, and/or a specified contracted reward such as 15 minutes of free time at the end of the school day to play a computer game.

2. The behavioral contract must be precise and systematic and each condition of the contract specified. This includes dates; times for completion; antecedent conditions; criterion behaviors; amounts and range of consequences; and the names of the student, teacher, and others involved in the contract. The purpose of the contract is to formalize an agreement for specific student-behavior change contingent upon specific teacher-provided positive consequences.

3. Behavioral contracts must be fair to both the student and the teacher. A contract implies the power of both parties to negotiate its terms. If the terms are unfair to one party or the other, the contract is not likely to be successful. If the student is expected to provide too much behavioral change for minimal reinforcement or, conversely, the teacher is expected to provide maximum rewards for limited student-behavior change, the contract is likely to fail. Contracted behaviors and consequences must be balanced to the satisfaction of both parties in order for them to follow through with their contractual responsibilities.

4. The terms of a behavioral contract should stress the positive. Behavioral contracts provide powerful positive incentives for increasing appropriate academic behaviors and prosocial skills. A behavioral contract which emphasizes positive consequences for appropriate behavior rather than punishment for inappropriate behavior will be more readily adhered to by the student.

5. The concept of shaping is often used when establishing behavioral contracts. If a desired student behavior does not exist or occurs only at a minimal level, the contract might be designed to first reinforce approximations of the final desired behavior. Opportunities for easy early success exist when behaviors already in the student's repertoire are initially rewarded. As the student becomes increasingly successful in meeting the terms of the contract, the criteria for receiving the reward can also be gradually increased.

6. A consultant or arbitrator may be helpful at first in the negotiation of behavioral contracts between the student and the teacher. In many contracts, both the student and the teacher must change their behaviors. Under these circumstances, a third-party arbitrator who assists in the negotiation, implementation, and monitoring of the contract permits the terms of the contract to be fair to both parties. Another teacher, a counselor, a school psychologist, an administrator, or a parent may serve as the contract arbitrator.

7. The behavioral contract should be a formal written document which specifies all privileges and responsibilities of the student and the

teacher. It should be signed by all the parties involved. The contract is a negotiated agreement between two people which allows both the contractor (the teacher) and the contractee (the student) to predict the consequences for contracted behaviors. Signatures enhance the formality and commitment of the contract.

8. Both the consequences which follow the completion of the contracted behavior (*the A clause*) and the consequences for noncompletion of the contracted behavior (*the B clause*) should be specified. The B clause is not an added punishment for failure to comply with the terms of the contract but is simply a statement that the reinforcers specified in the A clause will not be provided if the agreed-upon behaviors do not occur. By specifying the consequences for completing and not completing the contract, that is, by including both the A and B clauses in the contract, the possibilities for misinterpretation or error are reduced.

9. Reinforcing consequences must always follow the completion of the contracted behavior and must be delivered immediately. In establishing behavioral contracts, the opportunity should be provided for the student to receive some portion of the reinforcing consequence immediately upon completion of the contracted behavior. Contracts are often designed to provide small but continuous rewards for daily behaviors and larger rewards following the completion of major parts of the contract.

10. Behavioral contracts should progress from teacher-initiated to student-initiated as rapidly as possible. While behavioral contracts are negotiated documents, it is generally true that the terms of initial contracts are designated and controlled by the teacher. Behavioral contracting will have more generalized and long-lasting effects when the student is able to propose the privileges and responsibilities to be included in future contracts and less formal agreements for behavior change in the classroom.

Case Study

Brian is a 13-year-old boy of above-average intelligence who is quite disruptive and noncompliant in both the self-contained classroom for students with E/BD and in the regular social studies class where he is included for an hour each morning. His behavior in the math class, where he spends an hour every afternoon, is generally quite appropriate and his teacher, Mr. Johnson, reports no real problems with Brian during math. His grades, in all areas except math, have been D's and

E's for the last two 6-week periods. He enjoys being with his math teacher and often appears in Mr. Johnson's classroom after school to discuss math problems and backpacking, a hobby they both enjoy. When Brian is not actively disrupting his other classes, he is usually doing math problems rather than his assigned tasks.

Brian's disruptive classroom behavior includes being verbally abusive to his teachers and his peers, making loud noises when others are speaking, walking around the classroom, and constantly "poking" at his classmates. He has few friends and spends most of his time alone or bothering other people.

Behavioral Contract

A-Clause

PART 1: If Brian's social behavior in the special education, the social studies, and the math classrooms is judged appropriate by the teachers (criteria of appropriateness to be determined before this contract is initiated), he will earn one certificate per class per day. Thus he can earn a maximum of 15 certificates a week for appropriate social behavior.

PART 2: If Brian's academic behavior in the three classes improves, he will earn one certificate per letter grade on the weekly tests:

E = 0 certificates
D = 1 certificate
C = 2 certificates
B = 3 certificates
A = 4 certificates

Thus a maximum of 12 certificates a week can be earned for grades.

For each week that Brian earns 18 certificates, he will be issued a pass to Mr. Johnson's math class to serve as a math assistant and tutor on Monday and Thursday of the following week.

For each week that Brian earns 22 certificates, he will also be issued a pass to spend one half hour a day after school for three days of the following week with Mr. Johnson. These three half-hour periods will be spent discussing any appropriate topic Brian wishes.

B-Clause

If Brian does not earn a total of 18 certificates per week, he cannot serve as a math assistant for Mr. Johnson the following week.

If Brian does not earn a total of 22 certificates per week, he cannot meet with Mr. Johnson for one half-hour a day after school for three days the following week.

All terms of this contract have been negotiated freely between me, Brian Lloyd, and Mr. Johnson, my math teacher, Mrs. Nelson, my social studies teacher, and Ms. Evans, my special education teacher.

_____ Brian Lloyd _____ Mrs. Nelson _____ Date

_____ Mr. Johnson _____ Ms. Evans

Summary

Formal behavioral contracts are a highly structured means for providing students with E/BD with reinforcement for their positive behavior (Walker et al., 1995). As Rhode et al. (1993) note, some teachers may view contracts as too complex and too demanding of their time and effort. However, well-designed contracts have a powerful potential for providing students with the opportunity to make significant changes in their behavior. As with the other teacher-mediated interventions described in this text, contracting is only effective in altering student behavior if teachers are committed to the systematic, consistent, and predictable negotiation and application of contracts.

Conclusion

Effective classroom management is crucial for the well-being of all students. Accumulated literature on effective teaching strategies (Nelson & Rutherford, 1988) has borne out the fact that teachers who use positive behavior management strategies create a classroom environment that is conducive to academic learning and social acceptance of students. In addition, positive behavior management strategies enable teachers to deal with typical classroom challenges in an effective manner. Effective classroom behavior management includes the managing of student problem behaviors, as well as the teaching of desired alternative behaviors, to students who exhibit emotional or behavioral problems.

Positive teacher-mediated management approaches include social reinforcement, token reinforcement, modeling, and behavioral contracting. Social and token reinforcement serve as effective behavior enhancement procedures for students who lack intrinsic motivation. Students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) who have the desired behaviors in their repertoires but fail to perform those behaviors at acceptable levels often benefit from these interventions.

Modeling as an instructional procedure has been effectively used with students of all ages with E/BD. In this procedure students are provided with actual demonstrations of desired behaviors to prompt imitation of those behaviors. The procedure is based upon the premise that by observing the desired behavior and seeing that behavior being reinforced in others, students are more likely to imitate the behavior.

Students who need clarity, specificity, and detail in their behavioral goals, responsibilities, and consequences usually benefit from behavioral contracting. A behavioral contract is a formal written agreement for student behavioral change negotiated between a student and a teacher, parent, peer, or other person. Teachers often use this procedure when

other behavior management interventions have failed to produce desired student behavioral change.

By systematically incorporating these techniques into classroom instruction, teachers are likely to provide students with a positive climate that is necessary for producing desired student behavioral change.

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